

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 96

By Watson

A RESOLUTION relative to Medal of Honor recipients from World War II.

WHEREAS, World War II, the most widespread war in history, lasted from 1939 until 1945; and

WHEREAS, the United States entered the war in 1941, following an attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese fighter planes; and

WHEREAS, over sixteen million Americans served their country and the Allied powers over the course of the war; and

WHEREAS, the men and women who served our country in World War II have been collectively called the "greatest generation" for their selfless sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that is awarded by the United States government; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is presented by the President of the United States, in the name of Congress; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor is only conferred upon members of the United States Armed Forces who distinguished themselves through conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in action against an enemy of the United States, while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force, or while serving with friendly forces engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States was not a belligerent party; and

WHEREAS, more than 3,400 Medals of Honor have been awarded to our nation's bravest soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen since the creation of the award in 1861; and

WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor was awarded to 353 Americans during World War II;
and

WHEREAS, only four of those 353 Americans are still alive today; and

WHEREAS, each of these courageous servicemen, Charles H. Coolidge of Tennessee, Francis S. Currey of New York, Robert D. Maxwell of Oregon, and Hershel Woodrow Williams of West Virginia, risked his life while serving his country with conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity and therefore deserves the gratitude of the American people; and

WHEREAS, the President of the United States has the sole authority to designate a state funeral; and

WHEREAS, historically, the President of the United States has designated state funerals for former presidents, generals, and other extraordinary Americans; and

WHEREAS, our nation is currently divided and yearns for a unifying national event; and

WHEREAS, designating a state funeral when the last surviving World War II Medal of Honor recipient dies would be a wonderful way for the American people to unite and honor all sixteen million soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen who served in our Armed Forces from 1941 to 1945; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that this General Assembly urges the President of the United States to designate a state funeral for the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient from World War II when such recipient passes away.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk of the Senate is instructed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, and all members of the Tennessee congressional delegation.